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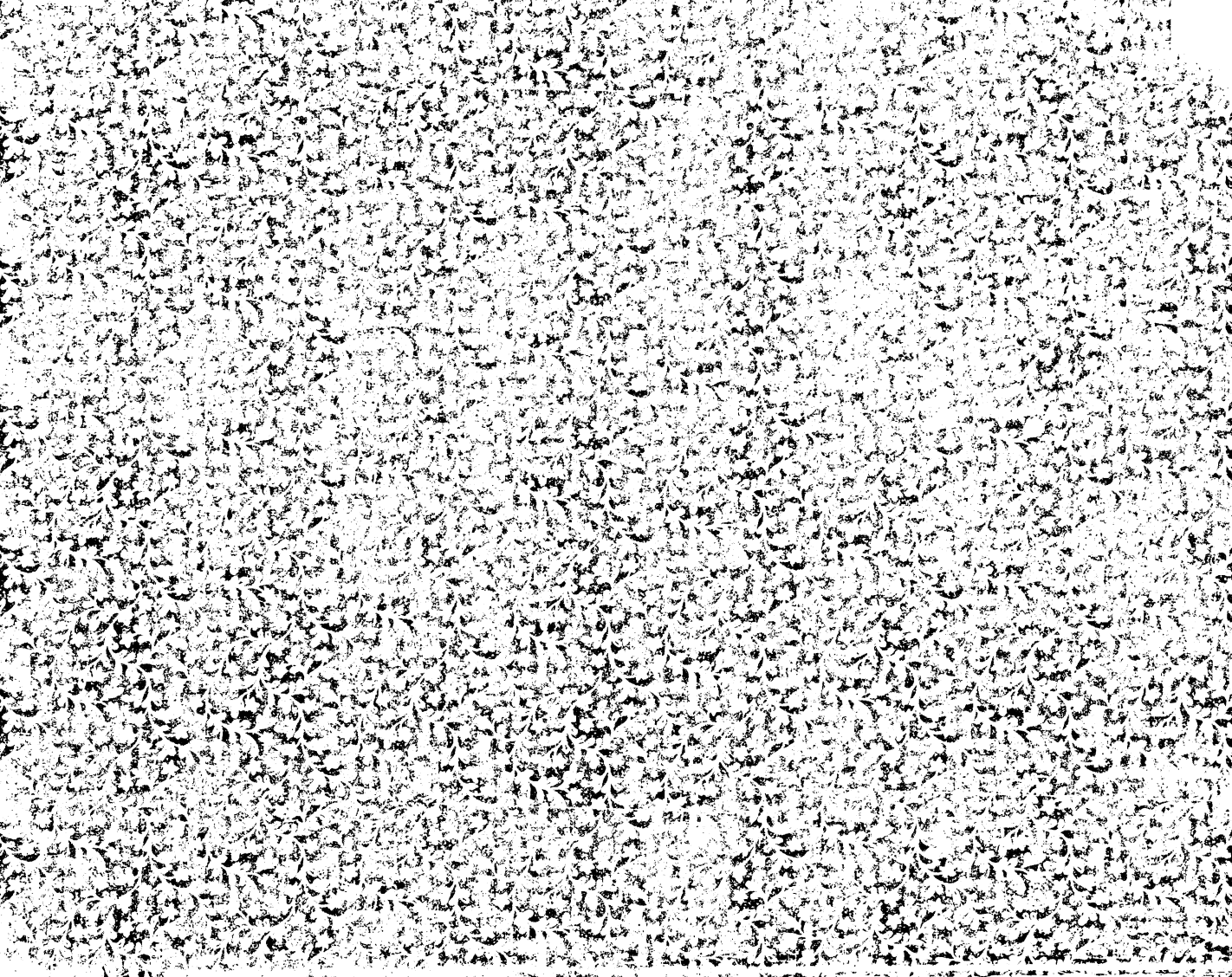

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WILD FLOWERS

BY

RUTH A. O'CONNOR

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Copyright,
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1885.

Beloved Mother:

After the flowers that you have always loved, and which you and I have so often gathered together, and for each other, I name this little collection.

YOUR BIRTHDAY,
MAY 8, 1885.

NOV 19 FEB '36

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WILD FLOWERS.

AT BETHLEHEM.

NOW the hour hath come, and the Babe is born,
And our hope-filled hearts beat high and fast;
For we know this is Joy's supremest hour,
And this time of grace cannot always last.

Let us haste away to the manger crib,
To lay our hearts at the Infant's feet,
To place our hopes in the Mother's hands,
And unite in the mystic scene so sweet.

Let us shrink not back from the midnight air,
But joyfully follow the shepherds afar:
We will keep within pace of the Orient band,
And steadily walk in the trail of the star.

Lo! the herds have abandoned their flocks beloved,
The Wise Men have journeyed from distant parts,
To proffer their incense, gold, and myrrh,
Whilst we have naught but our sin-stained hearts.

Oh, these sin-stained hearts! We pause in distress;
Our hope and joy for a while are chilled;
But anon we picture the Babe's sweet eyes—
Our courage revives, our fears are stilled.

For the heart that is sad with remembered sin,
The heart that is weary and sore oppressed,
Or the poor heart crushed with some untold pain,
May be just the heart that the Child loves best.

Anon we will pass through the cold, drear night
To the stable blest, our homage to pay,
And there will we kneel at the manger's side,
In a thrill of delight, till the dawn of day.

We will kiss the hem of the Infant's robe,
We will press our lips to the Mother's hand,
We will take one straw from the cradle-bed,
And with peace-awed hearts leave the Holy Land.

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.

HE stood beneath the Spring-time's joyous light,
A fair young picture framed in roses white,
Whilst at her feet the tender violets grew,
And, though all nature spoke of joy and peace,
And hailed Queen Summer and her flowers' increase,
This young heart neither peace nor gladness knew.

With eyes averted from the azure sky,
She heeded not the zephyrs wafting by,
Nor marked the note of nightingale's glad song.
There was no sunshine in her sorrowed heart;
With life's best hope she felt that she must part—
The hour had come that she had prayed for long.

. . . . . .

She stood beneath the Autumn's chastened light,
While brown leaves fell and drifted out of sight,
And sad winds whispered through the leafless trees;
And, dreading not the melancholy days,
She blessed God for His wondrous, hidden ways,
With glad face lifted to the chilling breeze.

LITTLE FLIRT.

HE bright, warm sun was shining
One Sabbath morn in May;
The air was heavy-laden
With flow'rs and new-mown hay;
A soft and pleasant zephyr
Came floating through the air
Across the fields, where cowslips
Were growing here and there.
All nature seemed in harmony,
And full of calm delight,
For not a thing was wanting
To make the scene more bright.

The little village chapel,
Built in the Gothic style,
Was sought by all the neighbors
For many and many a mile;
And on this bright May morning
The message of the bell
Had summoned all the villagers
From near and far as well.

The service soon was ended,
And all knelt down to pray;
The last notes of the organ
Had faintly died away,
When from the door came thronging
The people, one by one,
All looking calm and happy
Beneath God's glorious sun.
The poor man and the rich man
Were walking side by side;
Here was a sturdy farmer,
And there, perhaps, a bride.
But 'mong the many faces
No fairer could be seen,
Upon this bright May morning,
Than that of Bessie Deane.
And as she tripped so lightly
Across the chapel lawn,
A smile of sweet contentment
Upon her face was worn.
She looked like some bright fairy
With sunshine for her hair,
With woodland shadows in her eyes,
A brow unmarked by care.
This fairy's dress was muslin,
In flowing folds of white,

Encircled round with ribbon
  Of azure-tinted light.
This fairy wore a bonnet
  Trimmed prettily with blue;
Upon her head it rested
  So daintily that few
Could help but to admire
  The pretty, piquant face
Which beamed beneath that bonnet
  Of small blue flowers and lace.

•

Her steps she lightly wended
  Out to the chapel gate,
Where two impatient rivals
  For Bessie Deane did wait.
And Ralph stood at the left side,
  And Will stood at the right;
And both were watching Bessie
  As on she came, so bright.
The little flirt espied them,
  But looked the other way,
Though in her heart was planning
  A pleasant walk that day.
But presently she neared them,
  And raised her soft, blue eyes

In sweet bewilderment, that each
  In loving deemed him wise.
Ralph's eyes looked adoration,
  And Willie's did beseech;
And though she glanced at neither,
  She gave a hand to each.
And of two hearts, that morning,
  Young Bessie was the pride,
As through the daisied meadows
  The three walked side by side.
And Bessie gaily chatted,
  Pretending not to know
That two fond hearts experienced
  A pang of jealous woe.
Each joyfully accepted
  Her smiles as she'd allot,
But o'er her well-poised, classic head
  Vindictive glances shot.

Soon gallant Ralph bent over
  To fasten Bessie's glove;
His bright, dark eyes were looking
  A chapter full of love.
The glove was very awkward,
  Or Ralph was very weak;

It would not, would not fasten,
And Bessie looked so meek
That he retained the little hand,
Whilst furrows bent Will's brow.
But as the elfin only blushed,
Ralph thought his chance was now.
So, bending even nearer,
That Will might hear him too,
He said: "Three is, I fancy,
No company; don't you?"
"I do," said pretty Bessie;
And though she said so, still
She gently pressed Ralph's fingers
Whilst glancing up at Will.
Ralph thought he was the favored one,
And Will was sure 'twas he;
So both walked on as well content
As any man could be.
Thus for a good half-hour
Young Bessie smiled on both;
She knew she soon must leave them,
Though feeling rather loath.
Her mother must not see them
Come walking home with her,
For if she did, most probably
A lecture would occur.

So Bessie mused and wondered
  What plan she could devise,
Lest they should soon encounter
  Her mother's watchful eyes.
Thus silently she pondered,
  Whilst Will her blue eyes sought,
And murmured: "Little dreamer,
  A penny for that thought!"
"I'm thinking" (soft the answer came),
  "On this *delightful* day,
'Twould be so *very* pleasant
  Were *one* of you away."
She did not glance at either,
  But coyly fringed her eyes,
And clasped her hands together,
  And gave two little sighs.

"Are you in earnest, Bessie?"
  Thus spoke out honest Will.
"For if you really mean it
  I'll go at once; but still
I surely have no reason
  To take it to myself.
So which shall stay, dear Bessie?"
  Then blushed the little elf.

"May I stay, Bessie, tell me?"
And Ralph bent gently down,
A little disconcerted
By Will's indignant frown.
The pretty culprit spoke not.
Then Will again gave voice:
"Don't be so silent, Bessie;
'Tis time you made a choice.
Whatever your decision,
At once I will take heed;
Ralph also will, I warrant."
And Ralph cried out, "Agreed!"

Then steadily she answered:
"I say it not in jest,
That he will leave my side the first,
The one who loves me best."

Her voice rang out so clearly,
In such an earnest tone,
That at the last soft cadence
Young Bessie was—*alone!*

BORNE ON THE OLD YEAR.

LD year, sorrowfully gliding
To a dim and mystic clime,
Hopes, and joys, and sorrows hiding
In the boundless sea of Time,
As thou driftest from the Present
To the weird and solemn Past,
Bear some tidings true and pleasant:
They will be thy very last.

Take this message to Biella
From the sanctum of my heart:
Crown her with my love, and tell her
In this great world's busy mart
There is one who will remember,
As through life her journey wends,
That the vanishing December
Left the stranger-cousins *friends*.
Bid her in some tranquil hour,
If some thought my presence bears,
Name me to the All-wise Power—
Weave my name amidst her prayers.

THE VOICE OF HOPE.

N your hours of grief and sorrow
(If such hours come to you),
And you feel the world is shallow
And that friendship is untrue.
Listen to Hope's soft voice falling
Thrillingly upon the heart,
Like sweet, sympathetic music
Bidding ev'ry grief depart.
Listen, for 'twill bring you comfort,
It will bid you not to mourn;
'Twill remind you that 'tis ever
Darkest just before the dawn.

SILENT PRAYER.

S it possible to pray
And yet to utter not a word?
Thinking thoughts with unmoved lips,
Prayers which ears have never heard?

Folded hands and bended knees,
Humble words the heart can say
With closed lips and upraised hopes—
This is how I love to pray!

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A WHITE ROSE.

I.

ONE radiant summer morning I awoke to blissful, bewildering consciousness of existence. The dawn of my life was greeted by joyous sunshine, balmy, perfume-laden breezes, gentle rustling of trees, and the chirping of young robins. In an ecstasy of trembling delight I glanced around me, and oh! such a scene of beauty met my gaze! What benignant fate had placed me in this favored spot? This beautiful garden, my birthplace, must surely have received Nature's most propitious glance and Art's most tasteful training, to rejoice in so much loveliness. Not mine the power of describing the floral enchantment upon which I gazed that fairest of fair morns; but

vividly has the beauteous scene been presented and re-presented to my mind on subsequent days, less fair, less bright. And now, when all the youth and beauty have gone out from my life for ever, I glance back, through winter's snows and summer's heats, through tearful spring-time and autumn's melancholy days, upon that one glad morn when the world opened before me. It must have been Flora's festival day, over which Mother Nature presided in her most gracious mood; for never since have I beheld a clearer landscape, a bluer sky, or more golden sunshine. And my sister-flowers must surely have donned their gayest robes to grace the occasion, as in gladsome mood they bent their pretty heads beneath the passing breezes in greeting one to the other. A family of tall hyacinths stood in stately dignity beside a heart-shaped bed of bright geraniums, whilst some graceful fuchsias, in all their crimson loveliness, bent over a young lily, dropping now and then in floral playfulness a dew-drop on her fair, sweet face. Here was a bed of mignonette close to a growth of delicate ferns, and there some purple heliotrope casting its most fragrant perfume over a little group of Bethlehem stars. Near the centre of the garden was a cross framed in violet leaves; for the sweet little flowers

themselves had lived their young lives, had faithfully performed their appointed mission, and, when the spring-time waned, had drooped their slender heads and died, leaving behind a plenteous growth of dark-green leaves as a legacy of love. In one moist and shady spot a little community of forget-me-nots clustered together, having as a background some shaded carnations and sweetbrier. But my nearest companions were a family of rich crimson roses on one side, and on the other a growth of tender woodbine, clinging to and twining around some tastefully-devised, green-painted support. My heart went out to that woodbine from the first moment, and whenever a passing breeze swept unexpectedly adown the garden I bent my head behind my woodbine friend for mute protection. Thus, as the great Day King shone out in all his splendor, entranced I gazed around me, taking in all the beauty by which I was surrounded, and by the time he had reached his meridian I had become acquainted with all my sister-flowers.

Anon the zephyrs strayed from out the garden, as the noonday sun rested like a coronet of gold upon each floweret's brow, lulling her to sleep; and scarce a sound was heard save the refreshing drip, drip of the *jet-d'eau* in the centre of our floral home. My

sister-flowers seemed to have succumbed to the sleepy influence of the hour; but life to me was still too new and sweet to yield me to the loss of even one moment. Thus it was that I espied the busy bee earnestly gathering her honeyed store, as she murmured her mesmeric song over each floweret's head, and the tiny humming-bird insatiately speeding from flower to flower.

And the day waned; the noontide had long sped when the truant breezes timidly returned, whispering their balmy messages into each floweret's willing ear, awakening her from her slumbering. A smilax-covered portal swung lightly on its hinges as two fair human forms emerged into the garden, softly treading the gravelled pathway, and the cadence of a blithe and joyous voice was borne upon the zephyrs—a voice that probably had never mourned, had never had occasion for aught save mirthfulness.

"I thank you, Alma," said this voice, "for the gracious *carte-blanche* of your delightful garden, since I have concluded to wear natural flowers at the reception to-night. Which shall I choose?" As the forms approached: "Well, I see something here wondrously alluring." And as a fair, jewel-covered hand was extended, I shrank behind my woodbine friend; but, disregarding me, the hand rested

lightly on the full-blown crimson roses, and the voice continued: "A generous bunch of these in my corsage, with a less liberal supply at my throat, will be a charming contrast with my cream-satin dress. Do not you agree with me? But at what are you peering so intently?"

And then another voice responded—a voice marvellously low and sweet and clear—a voice that seemed made for solacing. "I am looking," said this voice, "to note the progress of my youngest rosebush, and am gladdened by the sight of one fair, opening bud." And slender, blue-veined, ringless fingers tenderly encircled my young life, giving thereto an added vibration. "Little white rosebud, I bid thee welcome to my garden." And a pale, clear-cut face bent above me, whilst liquid, violet eyes gazed earnestly into my heart, as the fair fingers gently separated my petals.

"Do you really admire that puny-looking little thing?" asked the joyous voice, whilst the jewels flashed as the white hands made havoc amongst my crimson neighbors.

"It is my favorite always; but in some inexplicable way this particular white rose seems to be connected with my fate. I blame you not for that rippling laugh—my fancies merit it; nevertheless I

am impressed with a feeling that this young bud will weave its fragrance through some desolate and some happier hours of my life." And the forms moved onward betwixt jessamine and lilies, and the voices grew fainter, and yet more faint, as I bent my weary head against my friendly woodbine, whilst the katydids amused themselves in playful contradiction, and the sun went down in a globe of crimson loveliness.

II.

I grew in floral beauty, each hour adding to my perfume and my pure white life, as I basked in glowing sunshine "from morn till dewy eve." Each day brought a gentle step unto me, each day did earnest eyes scrutinize me closely, as slender fingers moved over my unfolding leaves. But one drear morn, the prelude of a tearful day, whilst the dewdrops still lay upon my breast, the gentle step approached more slowly than was its wont, the pale face seemed paler, the large, dark eyes larger and darker, and the slender fingers were unmistakably thinner as they tremblingly rested over me.

"Little white rose," spoke the wondrous voice, low and clear, more gentle in its cadence than any

zephyr that had rippled athwart the garden—"little white rose, thou hast opened to full bloom on the saddest morning of my life."

Gently was I wrested from my parent bush, and I trembled within the trembling fingers that encircled me, as, separated from my one green leaf, I was borne alone from my floral home for ever, whilst a blithe young robin chirruped her farewell as I passed beyond the trellised portico. Through the darkened corridor into a darker room, where in one far corner lighted tapers kept watch around a silent form, was I noiselessly borne. Here was I placed upon a soulless breast, as pale lips were pressed upon the paler, unresponsive ones. And then the form knelt, the hands were clasped resignedly together, the eyes were raised tearlessly to a crucifix above the sleeper's head, whilst the pale, sensitive lips murmured: "Thou hast taken my best beloved, O Lord!—my mother: life is desolate; my heart is broken. Thou knowest best; Thy holy will be ever adored!" Then, whilst the young head was bowed, in a voice yet lower the sad tones came: "De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine." And as the tapers flickered fitfully, making weird shadows on the wall, I fell asleep with the solemn *Requiescat in pace* murmured near me.

I know not how long I slumbered, but I became conscious of an unusual stir in the sombre room, and discovered that many of my sister-flowers were surrounding the form upon whose breast I was reposing, though I looked in vain for my woodbine friend and my crimson neighbors. As the subdued stir increased, a kneeling form arose, and the slender fingers, whose touch was so familiar to my leaves, once more encircled me, and I was borne away.

I never saw the sombre room again. My home was now a smaller, lightsome room, my resting-place the pages of a book at the foot of a bronze crucifix. And here, each day at twilight, the dark-robed form knelt in low-voiced prayer, read from the page of which I formed the marker—"De profundis."

And after many sunless days, when the winter waned and the spring-time dawned again, the step, erst slow and languid, regained elasticity, the hands moved busily about the white-walled chamber, and one lilac-scented evening I was kissed and placed away.

Long was my repose, awakened by the sound of plaintive chanting in many female voices, accompanied by the odor of holy incense from the convent altar; and when next I saw the face so dear to my rose-heart it was encased as a picture in a pure

white frame. Never had it looked more lovely. All the old-time pensiveness was there, but it was intermingled with an expression of holy joyousness. And now I comprehend that she and I rest in our abiding-place on earth. The slender fingers, now draped in heavy sleeves, have placed me near her best-loved meditation, "The Prayer in the Garden," and oft at the close of Compline I am gently sought. Her fingers still are ringless, her only ornament the silver cross upon her breast, and the calm light upon her face betokening interior peace; for her life is now espoused to Him to whom she yielded so resignedly her heart's best treasure; who, in His incomprehensible wisdom and love, bereft her of all she held most dear on earth, that she might, like the beloved disciple, lean upon His breast for all eternity, knowing no love save His.

'TWIXT HOPE AND FEAR.

HOU knowest what is best for me,
My destiny is in Thy power;
And in this desolated hour
Gladly I yield myself to thee.

Take Thou my heart, so wayward, weak;
Remove its enervating chill;
Bend Thou my unrelenting will,
And teach my lips what they should speak.

For, oh! Thou knowest what is best,
And surely I am still Thy child,
E'en though my struggles have been wild,
For nowhere have I sought for rest

But at Thy feet. Then guide me on,
And I will follow with closed eyes,
And, yielding blindly, deem me wise
To journey whither I am drawn.

Thou knowest what is best for me,
My destiny is in Thy power;
Thus in this weird, enchanted hour
I place my hopes, my fears, with Thee.

GOD BLESS YOU, DARLING!

"OD bless you, darling!" O'er the cradle bending,
The fond young mother gazes anxiously,
Whilst Heavenward her fervent prayer is soaring:
"Watch o'er him, Father; guard him tenderly."

"God bless you, darling! Sad, oh! sad is parting,"
The maiden whispers to her sailor love;
"The sea is rough, and dangers will surround you.
But God is good; He'll guard you whilst you rove."

"God bless you, darling! We will meet in heaven,"
The husband murmurs to his dying wife;
"I'll join you there, for now my heart is sinking,
And soon I'll leave this weary world of strife."

"God bless you, darling!" What a world of sweetness
This little whisper brings to every heart!
We breathe it gladly when we meet a loved one,
We breathe it sadly when we're doomed to part.

AN IDLE MORNING.

'VE naught in the world to amuse
me to-day.
Do put by that book, I implore;
'Tis not interesting: be candid and
own
You've found it an out-and-out
bore.
For twenty-five minutes you've earn-
estly read—
What knowledge, pray, have you
gained by it?
Not a bit, and you know it. What? What did
you say?
You heartily wish I'd be quiet?
Yes, certainly, so you may pore o'er that book—
A novel, a trashy one too.
The heroine's graceful and tall, I presume,
With eyes of the dark hazel hue?

You wish I'd behave as a young lady should,
And walk on the lawn with my mother?
Oh! no; I'd much rather stand here in the sun,
Tormenting your sister's *sweet brother!*
I wish you would smile. Oh! how savage you look!
I'm really beginning to fear you.
Do smile, if but once; then fresh courage I'll gain
To venture another step near you.
You see I have nothing whatever to do;
Please give me permission to tease.
Oh! dear, how you startled me when you looked up:
I thought you were going to sneeze.
You wish I'd go 'way? Oh! I'm certain you do.
But no, not a step will I move;
That teasing is medicine you very much need,
To-day I'll endeavor to prove.
Dear me! how excited you're looking just now!
Did the hero do anything rash?
What! am I mistaken? No, surely I saw
A smile, spite your heavy moustache.
Please put by your book, and I'll finish it for you;
I know how those novels all end;
I'll do it up nicely, in style sentimental—
I will, if you'll only attend.
I'm a pest and a humbug? Is that what you said?
You wish you could finish your story?

I'll end it up for you; it finishes thus:
He dies, and she marries the Tory.
Don't gnaw your moustache; 'tis a bad-temper sign,
And frequently indicates rage.
And now let me tell you—I've carefully watched—
Not once have you turned o'er that page.
Your secret I've guessed—not a line have you read.
I'll give you just till I count ten
To put by your book, and—what! frowning? Poor me!
Oh! dear, what queer creatures are men!

PANSY.

FAIR was the flower that bloomed in my garden,
Gentle and shy, yet so tender and bright;
Soft-eyed and winsome, and sweetly confiding—
Beautiful pansy, the garden's delight.

Rude winds stole into my bright little garden,
Swept by the roses, not caring for them,
Bent o'er my pansy in wild admiration—
Bore off my sensitive plant from its stem.

And fair was the maiden who bloomed in the garden—
Bloomed in the garden of my happy heart;
Gentle and shy, like her namesake, the pansy,
And of her namesake a sweet counterpart.

Fair was the morning, one morning in May-time,
Watched I the pansy-eyes moistened with tears;
Clasped I the slender hand, blue-veined, transparent,
Crushed in my coward heart all anxious fears.

Fair, ah! too fair, was this peerless young pansy—
Too fair and frail through this rude world to glide;
Bright angels bore her away to their garden:
Thus I'm bereft of my sweet pansy-bride.

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

WHAT is "A Mother's Influence"? According to our lexicon, influence signifies directing power, sway; and mother, according to the lexicon of the human heart, implies the best and truest friend 'neath Heaven.

Hence we understand a mother's influence to be the directing power exercised by our best and truest friend on earth. And being man's best friend, what wonder that her influence for good has been proverbial in all ages?

The effect of mother-influence has been exemplified in every stage of life, from the cradle to the grave; in every condition of life, from sumptuous palace unto lowly cot.

What a magic spell encircles the name of mother in the direction of a child when we would incite him to some generous deed or restrain him from evil! "How pleased mother will be!" we tell him; and

the bright eyes emit an added lustre, happy smiles play around the dimpled face, and we know that the young heart throbs with joyous exultation.

Again, how often have we seen a shadow of pain, a little, pale shade of sorrow, creep into the rosy child-face when we venture the rebuke, "What will mother think?" and after a moment's hesitation, perhaps, the contemplated mischief is abandoned.

And strong men, too, are under the spell of this maternal sway. The sailor far from home, his destiny cast 'twixt sea and sky; the soldier on the field of battle, alike acknowledge the power of a mother's influence. The brave warrior from "Bingen on the Rhine," giving his life in defence of country, is but a type of hundreds, nay, thousands, whose last earthly thoughts were wafted home to mother.

Before remitting himself entirely into the hands of God, to the exclusion of every other thought, his heart yearns towards home—to mother; and ere snaps the feeble link binding him to earth he makes in his mind a provision for the happiness of her declining years, sending home the message: "Tell my mother that her other sons will comfort her old age." And his earthly hopes and fears, his day-dreams, his ambitions ended for ever, he consigns himself to the mercy of the good God.

Ah! yes, from the cradle to the grave, youth and old age alike feel the happy effects of a mother's direction. I have seen an old man weep as proudly he recounted an episode of maternal influence in the morning of his life; and now at its eve, at its near approach of night, he weeps at its remembrance.

And eighteen hundred years ago, in Cana of Galilee, the best Son deigned even that His first miracle should be wrought at the unspoken desire of His Mother.

Thus, as the reflection of a summer sunset on a broad expanse of water, a mother's influence is mirrored in the character of man.

THE "TE DEUM" OF NEW YEAR'S EVE.

E thank Thee, Lord, adoringly we thank Thee,
For all the gifts Thou'st yielded unto us
In the gone year. Kneel we in love-awed silence,
Liking to render our thanksgiving thus.

Too blind, too weak is human understanding
To comprehend or fathom what is good;
A death-knell oft is faint, mysterious joy-bells,
And sorrow sometimes lurks 'neath gladness' hood.

Thus, Lord, we thank, not only for the favors,
But for the trials Thou hast sent instead;
Thou knowest best; relying on Thy mercy,
Thou wilt not give us stones in place of bread.

Would that our hearts were fair as fragrant lilies!
Fain would we lay them at Thy sacred feet—
Some steeped in joy, some others sorrow-freighted,
All thank-pulsated with each throb and beat.

Give unto us, whilst making this thanksgiving,
More faith and hope to estimate the crown;
Grant Thou us grace to clasp each cross presented,
And kiss the hand that sent the trial down.

Yea, Lord, we thank Thee, though in sorrow conscious
That these poor hearts are quite too weak, too small
To render to thee adequate thanksgiving;
We can but murmur: "Thank Thee, Lord, for all!"

DROOPED—FADED—DIED.

WHITE June rose
Was blooming 'neath the noonday sun,
Nor knew repose
Until its summer work were done.
A zephyr sighed—
Its breath reached not that thirsting flower;
Scorched by the sun, it lost all power—
Drooped—faded—died.

A maiden fair
Met one she deemed a noble prize;
Her beauty rare
Found favor in his courtly eyes.
He left her side,
For love by him was soon forgot,
And she, frail girl, complaining not,
Drooped—faded—died.

PARENTAL LOVE.

HAT is more true and lasting than the love a parent bears his child? Brotherly and sisterly love are dear, the love of a friend sweet; but, oh! where is the love which can compare with parental affection?

When sorrow visits us we have but to seek our consolation in parental love; for the soft voice of mother, or the firmer one of father, speaking words of comfort in our ear, makes our hearts light again and our spirits gay.

When sickness with its threatening hand hovers over us, is it from nurse, friend, or even sister that we wish to receive the cooling drink? Ah! no; 'tis from mother, who, with sweet smile and soft caress, makes us feel that, even though we are sick and suffering, earth has one bright, golden chain which binds us to it.

'Tis the gentle pressure of mother's hand on our forehead which drives away pain; mother's soft voice in our ear teaching us the sweet example of patience which we are to follow; and mother's kiss on our lips which makes us feel that even Heaven were dreary were mother not there.

JESUS TO THE SOUL OPPRESSED.

CANNOT take thee yet, My child: the journey
Is still a little longer; nerve thy heart
To meet with fortitude the weary hours
That oft confront thee in the world's great mart.
Rest on My love, whate'er thy trials be—
The most afflicted heart is most beloved by Me.

I know each pang with which thy soul is wrestling,
And fain would take thee, had I not in store
A crown of light for all thy brave endeavors—
Each cloud surmounted makes its beauty more.
Amidst the harsh world's tumult and the fret
Abide awhile, My child; I cannot take thee yet.

Not yet, poor soul! A few more darksome hours,
And sore temptations met and overcome,
A few more crosses bravely, meekly carried,
Ere I can proudly call the tried one home.
Nerve, then, thy heart; the toil will soon be done,
The crown of self-denial nobly earned and won.

For soon will come a day when all thy conflicts,
As waves receding on a stormy sea,
Will vanish from thee, and some fair, glad hour
Will bring the tried and chosen unto Me.
Then thou'lt be freed from ev'ry pain and smart,
And rest thy tired head upon My wounded heart.

UNEXPRESSED THOUGHTS.

BEAUTIFUL golden sunset,
A tranquil, rippling sea,
Sweet odors wafted faintly
From lilac and hawthorn-tree;

The sound of some distant church-bell,
The twitter of birds at play
All coarser sounds being ended,
Proclaiming the close of day.

A breeze coming up from the water
Playfully rustles my dress,
Whilst beautiful thoughts I am thinking—
Thoughts that I cannot express;

Bright thoughts that I'm longing to utter,
Sweet thoughts gently crowding my mind,
Of all the best glories of nature,
Of mercy and power combined;

Glad thoughts of the beauties around me,
From bright, rosy sky to green sod,
All having one theme for their centre—
Beginning and ending with God.

Though thronged is my mind with these fancies
So brilliant, yet nevertheless
I fear I shall never be able
These beautiful thoughts to express.

THROUGH THE VALLEY.

E will wander through the valley,
You and I, love, you and I,
Where the sunlight loves to dally,
Where the song-birds love to hie.

We will gather fair young roses,
You and I, love, you and I,
As the sun each charm discloses
Ere the glad day passes by.

We will tread the upland passes,
You and I, love, you and I,
Lightly o'er the daisied grasses
Radiant 'neath the summer sky.

Toward the little church we'll wander,
You and I, love, you and I;
There in peace we'll kneel and ponder
Till the sunset draweth nigh.

We will place the fragrant flowers—
  You and I, love, you and I—
'Neath the sacred Altar bowers,
  Near the shrine so pure and high.

We'll return then through the valley
  Where the song-birds love to hie,
Where the sunlight loves to dally—
  You and I, love, you and I.

A LEGEND OF THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

"RISE, and take the Child and His Mother into Egypt." St. Joseph promptly obeyed the mandate of the angel; and we see the Divine One and the blessed two fleeing through the solemn darkness of the night. The holy young Mother is seated upon an ass, with her little Babe tenderly folded to her breast; whilst the gentle Foster-father, the kind Protector, carefully guides the way.

What rapture must have filled Mary's heart, despite its weight of fears, as she clasped her Child in her arms! How she must have thrilled at the touch of the tiny hands upon her throat and face! And how joyously her heart must have throbbed as she gazed into the grave, sweet eyes!

And Joseph, too—what must have been his joy when the sacred privilege was his sometimes, during

the journey, to carry the Divine Babe, and with reverent tenderness fold It in his arms!

Father Faber beautifully proposes this Egyptward flight of the Infant Saviour as a type of the visits of our good priests (God bless them!) to the sick and dying.

In this wearisome journey of the Holy Family they came upon a man sowing wheat. Some mysterious influence attracted him to the travellers. From the countenance of the Virgin Mother, or from the earnest eyes of the Child she bore in her arms, a softening gleam of grace descended into his heart. He was very kind to them and permitted them to cross his field; and the young Mother, folding her Babe yet more closely to her heart, leaned forward, explaining to him that they were pursued by enemies. "And if they come this way," said the sweet, low voice, "and ask if you have seen us—"

"I shall say you did not pass this way," was the eager interruption.

"Nay," said the Blessed Mother, with gentle dignity, "that would be falsehood and a sin. You must only speak the truth. Say: 'They passed me whilst I was sowing this corn.'"

And the travellers pursued their journey. The

next morning the sower was amazed to find his corn had sprung up and ripened in the night. While he was gazing at it in astonishment Herod's officers rode up and questioned him.

"Yes, I saw the people of whom you speak," said the sower. "They passed along here whilst I was sowing this corn."

Then the officers moved on, feeling assured that the persons to whom the sower referred were not the Holy Family, for such fine, ripe corn must have been sown several months previously.

Thus the holy Fugitives arrived safely in Egypt; and when the wicked king died miserably in his magnificent palace, the angel again appeared to St. Joseph, bidding him bring Mary and her Babe to Nazareth, their home.

DREAMING.

SITTING here in the quiet evening,
Gazing into the star-gemmed sky,
Wondering what are the Angels doing
In that beautiful world on high;

Fancying what must be their rapture,
Clustered around the great white throne,
Where there is never a tear nor a sorrow,
Never a sigh and never a moan;

Asking my heart a thousand of questions
All about those realms on high—
Thousands of weird and fanciful questions,
Eagerly hoping for some reply;

Sitting here in the quiet evening,
Gazing into the star-gemmed sky,
Fancying what the bright Angels are doing
In that beautiful world on high.

HE AND I.

HE was large, and strong, and brave:
I was small, and weak, and slight.
He was dark, majestic, grand,
Almost twice my fragile height.
He had lustrous eyes, like night;
He was brilliant, witty, wise:
I, a little, pale-faced maidèn,
Quiet, shy, with sad, gray eyes.
And, although quite opposites,
In *one* thing we did agree,
And I tremble as I tell it—
I loved him, and he loved me.
I loved him—alas! how well;
He loved me—but that is past:
I, the little, pale-faced one,
Loved him fondly to the last.

In the spring-time of our joy
How we revelled in our love!
But too soon there came a time
Our twain hearts to surely prove.

"Little one," he fondly said,
"I must leave you for a while.
I shall miss your soft, sweet voice,
Sadly miss each loving smile.
I shall hunger for one glance
From my darling's shy, gray eyes,
That so oft have beamed on me
With a loving, glad surprise.
'Tis for *you*, sweet, that I go
To this dreary foreign shore;
I'll return with untold wealth,
At your feet my all to pour."

Then he caught me to his arms,
And I trembled at his touch;
For he seemed so fiercely fond,
And I loved him, oh! so much.

"You must never doubt my love,
But must have implicit trust."
"Doubt you! doubt *you!*" I made answer—
"You, so tender, true, and just?"
I to doubt him—that strong man?
Why, the thought were sacrilege!
But I dared not disobey him,
So I gave my solemn pledge.

Then he gently stroked my hair,
  Murmured softly: "Little one,
We'll be parted many miles
  Ere another day is done.
May I hope your childish love
  Will not waver? May I feel
That my little, timid girl
  Will be true, come woe, come weal?
Ah! 'twill be a miracle,
  Darling, if you do not change.
You have yet to learn, sweet child,
  How young hearts are prone to range."

Then I wildly clung to him,
  Feeling that some doom were near;
And he whispered loving words,
  Kissed away the rising tear.
And I proudly told my heart,
  Should a sorrow ever grieve me,
'Twould not be through him—ah! no.
  That strong man would ne'er deceive me.
But perhaps (for who can tell?)
  I, so very young, might change;
Had not he, my king of men,
  Said, "Young hearts are prone to range"?

Then on bended knee I prayed
  God to keep me true and good,
Faithful, fond, unchanging to
  This my ideal of manhood.
And two strong, two loving arms
  Tenderly uplifted me;
And anon he said farewell
  To his "little wife" to be.
With his last kiss on my face
  Steadily he crossed the door;
And I watched him in the gloaming,
  And I saw him—*never more!*

Shall I, *need* I tell the rest?
  How the dreary months dragged on,
How I wearied, waited, pined
  When that large, strong man had gone?
Nay! suffice for me to tell it,
  As I tremble through and through:
He, the strong, brave man, was faithless;
  I, the small, slight girl, was true.

IN A SCHOOLGIRL'S FLORAL ALBUM.

INTO the heart of the Morning-Glory
I have whispered, soft and low,
Something that concerns you only—
Something you will like to know.
Bend your ear, and mutely listen,
Whilst the Morning-Glory tells
All the gladsome wishes for you
I have left amidst her bells,
All the wishes for the Future
I have nestled there for you—
Hoping, 'mid Life's clouds and sunshine,
They will ev'ry one come true.

IN JOSIE'S ALBUM.

I GAZED on a little star last night,
Embedded in azure blue,
And as it twinkled in calm delight
I murmured a prayer for you.

I prayed: "May Josie be pure and good,
Enriching her heart each day—
A model of fairest maidenhood
When Time steals childhood away."

Adieu, little Josie! In years afar
Remember my prayer for you,
Recorded one night to a little star
Embedded in azure blue.

OUTSIDE THE FOLD.

EARIED out with doubts and fears,
And eager groping towards the light,
My nights can tell of sighs and tears,
My brightest days seem dark as night.

For I have strayed away so far,
And anxious thrills my senses rack;
Oh! from Thy wondrous Mercy-Bar
Stretch forth Thy hand and take me back.

Oh! take me back into the fold,
The weary, worn, bewildered sheep,
And, with a rapture never told,
I'll shelter near Thee, cease to weep.

Incline Thy mercy from above,
  And span the deep, the dark abyss
That separates me from Thy love
  And all those blessings that I miss.

One little ray of grace I ask,
  On that to build my tower of might;
And then 'twill be my joyous task
  To add unto it day and night.

But, ah! before I close my plea,
  Forgive me that I've caused Thee pain;
Now that I'm reconciled to Thee
  I'll never wander forth again.

Then, oh! extend Thy loving hand,
  And place me in the fold once more;
Teach me *anew* to understand
  The way to love Thee and adore.

A BIRTHDAY WISH.

I.

ONCE again the brown November,
With her sear and yellow leaves,
Prelude of a chill December,
Through the land her presence weaves.

II.

Once again a joyous birthday
Comes to cheer Life's graver hours,
As the song-bird's lay of mirth may
Gladden spring-time fraught with showers.

III.

Once again my glad petition
Rises to the Throne above:
"Bless him, Father; be his mission
Ever one of peace and love!"

I ONLY MEAN HALF THAT I SAY.

COME, do not be sulky and look so provoking
On such a bright, sunshiny day.
Why should you get angry when I am but teasing
And only mean half that I say?

I own I have bothered and greatly annoyed you,
But then, love, you know it's my way;
And not alone mine—'tis the case with all women:
They only mean half that they say.

Just see all the minutes you've wasted already
In trying to have your own way;
I'll tease, and I'll tease, till your frowns have all vanished,
Still meaning but half that I say.

A smile? Ah! I've caught you. Why, rogue, you
are laughing!
Now teasing is done—for *to-day.*
So banish all frowns, and in future remember
I only mean half that I say.

COUNT TWENTY.

"I HATE oo! Oo naughty, bad dirl!" And the baby-hands were clenched angrily.

"What! what did I hear my Birdie say?" And the young mother moved towards her child. "You hate Rosa? Hate your sister? Why, Birdie, how is this?"

"See is a dweadful dirl, mamma; see upset my toys all tumble-tumble, and brote my dolly's nose."

"No, mamma, I really did not," said the elder child. "My dress caught, and Birdie's toys went over."

"Oo naughty Rosa! oo dwess didn't taught: oo did it."

"Gently, Birdie!" And the little one was lifted to her mother's lap. "Rosa did not purposely upset your toys; and even if she did, that would be

no reason that you should hate her. If you hate your sister you will never go to heaven and see God and all the pretty angels. God will not love naughty children; and you, my darling, have been very, very naughty."

"Touldn't help it, mamma—touldn't weally!" And the bright head was laid upon the mother's shoulder.

"Could not help it, Birdie? Yes, my darling, you could; and I will tell you how." The little baby-face, which gave promise of great intelligence, was raised to the mother's. "If you are ever again made angry, Birdie, just as you are about to say the first cross word stop for a moment and count twenty to yourself. You can count, Birdie; you know papa taught you up to fifty. Now, will you remember what I have told you, dear? And this will apply also to you, Rosa," turning to the elder child, "and to me, and to every one. You know by the time you have counted twenty the fevered breath of anger will have passed away—you will be no longer angry, Birdie. Do you think you understand me?"

"Ees, mamma; and the nest time Rosa bweats my dolly I sall tount twenty."

"That's a good little child!" And the mother settled her in the corner amongst her toys. Turn-

ing, she met her husband's eyes fixed smilingly upon her, and as she drew near him he said:

"I wish, Madeline, you would exert the same sweet influence over the servants as you do over the children. See! there goes Hannah out on the lawn with her hair tossed and her cap flying behind her."

"Yes, I see, Alfred. But you know we cannot look for perfection in any one," a little impatiently; "and the only serious fault which I have detected in Hannah is that she is prone to be untidy. But then her industry and her fondness for the children will, I think, compensate for her other fault."

"But, Madeline—"

"Now, Alfred!" throwing her head back.

"Tount twenty, mamma!" said a sweet, childish voice from the corner.

The mother paused; a crimson flush overspread the young face, reaching to the very roots of the soft hair and away behind the pretty, pink ears. The deeply-fringed eyes were lowered for an instant, and then quickly raised, as, laying her hand on her husband's arm, she said gently:

"Yes, you are right, Alfred. I must not forget to correct Hannah." That was all.

I think she must have counted twenty.

A CHRISTMAS WISH.

HARK! the Christmas bells are chiming
On the solemn midnight air;
And each echo, softly rhyming,
Seemeth like an Angel's prayer,

Whilst within the hallowed stable
Mary kneeleth near her Child—
Human heart seems scarcely able
To portray a scene so mild.

This the hour when untold graces,
Like sweet music on the air,
Hover o'er us, and the traces
Leave their impress ev'rywhere.

Sacred Infant! born this hour,
As the stars blink o'er the dome,
Manifest Thy love and power—
Richly bless this little home.

DREAMLAND.

HE Goddess Somna lightly touched
mine eyes
With velvet fingers, and I yielded
to
The soft, mesmeric influence and
sped
Into the realm of Dreamland; here
I quaffed
Delicious waters from the font of
Sleep—
Forgot all pain, distress, anxiety,
And wandered thro' the wondrous land of Dreams.

O wondrous land of Dreams, a treasure thou!
Friend of the weary brain and saddened soul.
Sweet are thy labyrinths and restful paths,
And all the low, hushed sounds accompanying.
Dear are the faces that we meet therein—
Faces and forms that never, nevermore

Will greet our waking moments; that have sped
Beyond the borders of our earth-land home.
And treasured, too, the absent ones who come
To visit us from far-off, foreign climes
With smile of tenderness we oft have seen.

O absent one! in Dreamland oft we meet.
O dear, dark, loving eyes that seek mine own,
And strong, firm hands that clasp my docile ones—
The Goddess Somna yieldeth all this bliss.
Oblivious to distress, anxiety,
I wandered through the wondrous land of Dreams;
And when the wanderings their limit found,
The Goddess Somna oped the portal fair,
Presenting to my gaze the waking world—
To my reluctant gaze the waking world.

CONSOLATION.

HEN the soul is filled with anguish,
When the heart seems almost broken,
When the parched lips long to utter
Words that never should be spoken;
When the head is aching wildly,
When the pulse is beating high;
When the hot hands press the bosom,
Keeping back each rising sigh;
When we feel there is no prospect
Of a coming brighter day—
Then it is sweet consolation
First to weep, and then to pray.

"POT-POURRI."

THE doctor said it was malaria; that I needed rest and must not see the inside of my office for a week or ten days.

Alice said I had overworked myself, fully agreeing with the physician that I must remain at home for a while and be doctored.

And I agreed with them both that a week of perfect rest was the very thing that I needed.

Malaria! I had often heard people complain of it, moan and groan and languish under it; but for my part I could resign myself to malaria once every year, if it always meant a week of delightful lounging in a perfect cottage overlooking a little garden redolent with nature's fairest offerings, with trailing woodbine forming a perfumed curtain around the door; and within a light-footed woman with a sweet, clear voice, gentle hands, and the face of an angel, always within sight, and frequently hovering

over one in tender solicitude. All this was constituted in the word malaria, from which I have long since recovered; though I sometimes wonder expectantly, Will it ever return again?

What an enchanted spot the world seemed that delightful week in the dawn of summer! Alice seemed more beautiful than ever—her eyes bluer, her hair more golden; and in her very presence there seemed to be something almost seraphic that I had never noticed before.

But so perverse is human nature, so imperfect the human heart, that even bliss may become monotonous. At least so I thought that sunny afternoon, as, reclining in my easy-chair, my eyes followed the lithe form of Alice as she flitted about our little parlor.

"Yes," she had said, as her slender fingers moved caressingly over my brow, and her darkly-fringed eyes gazed into mine—"yes, your holiday is almost over, and to-morrow you will turn from the poetry of flowers to the stern reality of law-books."

And I had answered that I would be glad to return to work, for this quiescent life, though delightful, was enervating.

She turned from me with a gentle smile, and, seating herself at the piano, awoke some soft minor

strains that I always loved; but, as if remembering that I was in rather a depressed mood, gently drifted into livelier melody, and presently was filling the summer air with fragments from "Patience" and "Pinafore," and finally the "Mascot" pot-pourri. Accomplishing which she arose, and, turning to me, said:

"This musical pot-pourri reminds me that I intended completing to-day the flower pot-pourri for my writing-desk." And producing an ivory-covered box, she began her work, or pastime. All the sweet-scented flowers that she had collected and dried were there in preparation to be formed into a sachet. But as her slender fingers strayed through the collection, and a light air rippled on her lips, I arose, declaring my intention to test my strength by walking to the Park. Her pretty lip pouted as she said:

"Oh! I thought you would like to see me finish my pot-pourri."

But, murmuring something like "nonsense," I waved my hand in adieu and strolled down the garden-path.

I reached the Park just as the band was giving forth delightful strains and the promenaders were in full force. But, feeling weary, I seated myself

in the shadow of some frail shrubbery to enjoy a quiet smoke; and, although invisible, I could distinctly hear fragments of conversation as the promenaders passed to and fro. And some of it was so ludicrous, or rather the *effect*, as the remark of one passer-by would seem to be continued by the next one, that I was sometimes inclined to laugh outright.

"Yes, she sang at the concert the other night," spoke a bright, girlish voice; "and she is just as sweet and winsome as a—"

"Big, frantic cow. Did you read about it?" spoke the next voice. "Weighing ever so many pounds; broke loose, frightened a child almost to death, and smashed—"

"The eclipse? Yes; had our burnt glass all ready. But then, you know, everything was so obscure, and—"

"There goes Miss Courtney. Don't you know her? That tall lady there to the right, with the elegant dress trimmed with—"

"Custard-pudding and a cup of chocolate is my favorite luncheon; but mamma says she would rather have me take—"

"That large willow-tree over there—is there not something weird about it? See how gracefully the

branches bend and sway. It reminds me for all the world of—"

"Mr. Taylor's monkey in its little red dress. Did you—"

"No, you really must let me have my own way for once, Frank; I positively *must*—"

"Jump over the moon. One is just as probable as the other. If you listen to what every one says you will fall into error just as sure as fate—"

"Or Mrs. Winslow's soothing-syrup. We've tried them both, but prefer the former."

"Clara, I cannot help admiring your new bonnet. I know it must have come either from Madame Du Val's or—"

"Blackwell's Island, three months ago. Poor fellow! Such a pity! It always makes me feel—"

"Up in a balloon? Yes, glorious such a day as this; that is, the ascent. Would be slightly apprehensive of the descent, though. Shouldn't like to come down right in the middle of—"

"A glass of fresh buttermilk, or some strawberries and cream; or, what would be more refreshing still—"

"That cashier in the other bank, sir. I ought to know him pretty well, sir; he married my aunt's—"

"Large carriage with three seats, just room enough

for six. I am getting such a lovely dress of azure mull, trimmed elaborately with—"

"Catskill Mountains for two weeks, and then Lake George. Oh! I just long to behold the beautiful scenery. I shall revel in poetry, romance, and—"

"Mrs. Carrington's baby was stung by a bee. She applied a poultice of—"

"Stocks, bonds, and railroad shares. And as for this rapid-transit business, my friend, all I have to say is—"

"'There's nothing half so sweet in life as'—"

"Mother's old Indian shawl, and a lot of old clothes for the children. She seemed quite happy, poor thing, and—"

"Nellie, do keep step, and don't walk so zigzag; and stop 'making eyes' at—"

"King James the First—or was it the Second? I confess I am no authority on history; and those questions always remind me of—"

But the simile was lost in an explosive chord from the band, a preliminary to the sweet strains of "Home, sweet Home."

"Oh! what a bright, brief afternoon this has been," spoke a sweet, clear voice—"a reflection of some hopes too bright not to be brief."

"Home, sweet Home!"—wondrously suggestive of buttered biscuits, tea, and lemon-cream cakes; wondrously suggestive of tender blue eyes with deeply-fringed lashes, busy white fingers, and a cheery voice. Or, as a young damsel remarked to her escort: "'Home, sweet Home' always reminds me of the kettle singing its merriest tune just before the water bubbles up, and pussy purring contentedly on the hearth-rug."

"Home, sweet Home!" I wondered if Alice had completed her pot-pourri to her satisfaction, and if she had forgotten my recent sullenness. I could easily anticipate her greeting: she would smile up into my eyes her sunniest smile, box my ears, and then forgive me. And, by way of an *amende honorable*, I would feign an interest in her pot-pourri it were impossible for me to feel, and would then make her smile whilst I told her of *my* pot-pourri—of the songstress who was as sweet and winsome as a big, frantic cow who smashed the eclipse; of the young lady who contemplated with delight the joy of wearing a dress trimmed with Catskill Mountains and Lake George; and of the other fair one who was rebuked for "making eyes" at King James the First.

SALUTATORY.

NCE more we hail our Distribution day—
The day of many smiles, perchance a tear;
And to our honored Bishop we convey
Our joyous welcome, loving and sincere.

This the first visit thou hast deigned to grace
The convent hall this year, that waited long;
Thy presence now thine absence will efface,
Reflecting gladness o'er our little throng.
We've marked the time, as with relentless tread
It drifted from us with a solemn tone;
The golden moments came, but quickly fled,
And vanished ere we knew they were our own.
Each hour bears its record to the Past,
Fraught with some incident of joy or pain:
A cloud surmounted—feelings overcast—
Perchance a face we ne'er shall see again!

Ah! yes, a face we ne'er shall see again.
For we have felt the chilly hand of Death;
Our tears have dripped like gentle summer rain;
Our prayers we murmured thro' our bated breath.
God sent an angel to our convent hall,
And thro' the March wind's sobbing, drear and chill,
Our young Ecilda answered to the call,
Yielding her life, obedient to His will.
There was no cause for weeping; still we wept,
For such a death-scene angels seldom see:
She passed from life as calmly as she slept,
Our pure, frail Cuban lily!—mourners we.
But not alone crossed she the portals dim;
Her Lord reposed upon her childish breast
For the first time; and, journeying with Him,
In safety she found eternal rest.

But now mid-summer, with her smiling face,
And wreath of roses on her golden hair,
With soft, green drapery and airy grace,
Comes tripping in our midst with gladsome air,
Proclaiming that she is our queen, and we
Must bow allegiance to her perfumed sway;
That fairer sovereign we may not see
Until another Distribution day.

Then hail! Queen Summer. Tarry long with us,
And trail bright flowers over all the earth!
We love to see thee in thy beauty thus;
Herald thou art of sunshine, joy, and mirth.
And hail! thrice hail! most reverend father, hail!
Proudly we bid thee welcome on this day:
Our reverential love will never fail—
Respectful homage we will ever pay.
And whilst we bid thee welcome to our hall,
And to our midst thy presence warmly greet,
We pray that next year may unite us all,
As here to-day, around thy honored feet.

VALEDICTORY.

EARS roll by in quick succession,
And we count them in their flight;
Some bring sorrow and oppression,
Some are fraught with joyous light,
And we glance thro' Time's swift turning
On some days too fair to last;
Yet no tender love or yearning
Can recall them from the Past.

O ye gone days—gone for ever!
Drifted from our loving sight!
From our hearts ye cannot sever
Friends and scenes once true and bright.

Thus this present happy hour
  Soon will be no more our own;
Time, with stern, relentless power,
  Hastens now to bear it home.
Yet this day, to me, will ever
  Be a picture bright and fair;
In my heart I will endeavor
  To preserve its impress there.
But 'mid all the smiles and gladness
  There's a tinge of sorrow, too;
For there ever is a sadness
  Shadow'd o'er the word "*adieu.*"
And perhaps when this day closes,
  With its music and its mirth,
With its mellow light and roses,
  We may never meet on earth.
But I trust our path to heaven
  May be trod in fear and love;
That, when earthly ties are riven,
  We will all unite above.

Good-by, Mother! Was there ever
  Tongue to name thee but with love?
Ever heart, when called to sever
  From thee, but thy worth could prove?

Thou hast all a mother's feeling
For the children in thy care;
Ev'ry little sorrow healing,
Making sunshine ev'rywhere.
I will miss thy kind protection
When I've said my last "farewell,"
And will oft, with fond affection,
On thy gentle guidance dwell.

Good-by, Sisters! When I wander
Through the gay world's busy maze,
I will think of you and ponder
On my happy convent days.

Lov'd companions! I must leave you
For a life untried and new.
Will my absence ever grieve you?
Fain I'd linger still with you.
Ah! no more we'll roam together
Through the garden's pleasant shade,
Heedless we, whate'er the weather,
As in mirth we laughed and played.
But, alas! those scenes of gladness
Vanish from me whilst I tell
Of the new, unmingled sadness
As I murmur my farewell!

Good-by, schoolmates! On the morrow
If some word my presence bears,
Think of me, but not with sorrow—
Breathe my name amidst your prayers.

Now my heart seems full of yearning,
As the parting draweth nigh.
Farewell, school-days! ne'er returning;
Convent home, good-by—*good-by!*

TWO SUNSETS.

I. FRANCIS.

"HE was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Proud was this widow of her only son—her noble-hearted, fatherless boy. And as they sat together beneath a drooping willow, watching the golden sunset, hailing the cuckoo's call, they were a picture of sweet content and blissful idleness—blissful idleness, for this was a Sunday evening, and these were vacation days. This, moreover, was the mother's birthday, as the bouquet in her lap could fragrantly attest—that bouquet of her best-loved flowers, wild white roses and woodbine, gathered by the hands dearest to her heart.

Bending towards the reclining form at her feet, she said, gently and smilingly: "My son, your hu-

mility has been severely exercised this month in college honors, universal praise, and, may be, some flattery. Let us trust, however," resting her hand on the golden head, "that your virtue is so strongly fortified that there is no unguarded avenue through which the enemy Pride may effect an entrance. Let us trust that the widow's boy gives all honor to God, to whom all honor is due."

And yet the humid eyes, looking into the calm, fair face beneath her, unconsciously testified, by their expression, that in her heart she felt that no praise was too good for him, no honor too great.

The bright, boyish face was upturned lovingly, the large, blue eyes met those seeking his, as, with unconscious humility, he replied: "Nay, mother, in the picture you have drawn I see no cause for pride. True that I received the highest honors conferred; true that mine ears were deafened by applause lavished upon the valedictorian; but that was but the harvest hour of many months of solid labor. Had any of my classmates applied themselves one-half as earnestly as I did, theirs undoubtedly would have been the honors. That bright, poetic hour was but the result of much practical, commonplace toil. God is good, my mother, and undoubtedly has blessed you; but your boy, after

all, is but the very least of your blessings," smiling brightly.

And as the summer breezes sang their lullaby to the drooping flowers, mother and son talked happily together of the receding past and the dawning future.

Merrily did the boyish laugh ring out as he recounted some college anecdote to the pleased ears above him; whilst the mother gazed tenderly into his fair, intellectual face and the bright eyes, mirrors of a happy heart. Anon they spoke of the future; and now the merry laugh was stilled, the fair face seemed more intellectual, more earnest than ever before, as the evening breeze swept the golden hair off the broad, white brow, whilst the large eyes gazed placidly over the green hill-tops.

And now the mother talked; and bright were the pictures drawn from her imagination—pictures in which her tall, fair boy was always the central figure: the crowning one a winsome maiden for his bride, and a rose-covered cottage over yonder by the hillside. Glad was the mother's heart, and hopeful; but to all her picture-drawing there was no responsive chord. . . .

He, too, was drawing pictures for the future—brighter, gladder, more glorious by far than those

to which he listened. *His* picture was no rose-crowned cottage surrounded with ease, but a life of self-sacrifice. No bright home-picture did he see, but a rude, rough cross, with a wasted Figure nailed thereto, bearing a thorn-crowned head; and one of those sacred nails, one of those precious thorns, was dearer to his heart than all the treasures of the world.

The mother ceased speaking and leaned towards her son. There was a moment's silence, save the robin's mirthful chirping and the zephyr's mysterious whispering through the trees. Then the youth at her feet arose and placed himself beside her. "Mother mine"—and the voice was low and hushed, and very earnest—"the future you have drawn may never be."

And in calm, clear, unhesitating accents he told her of the future *he* had planned: told her of his burning love for One; of his bright dreams and grand ambitions—ambitions, not of honor and esteem, for his ambition was to be unknown save by his Master, but for a life of generous self-denials. He told her how he longed to be an Ignatius or a Xavier, but would pass from this life well content simply as an Aloysius or a Stanislaus. He told her, too, how conscious he was of his inability to do

aught of himself, but that he leant entirely on, and gathered strength from, that glorious promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." With that for his beacon-light, what could shadow his pathway? With that for his strength, what enervation was there in weakness? With that for his watchword, what could deter him? Through what perilous temptations might he not pass unscathed, and not unscathed alone, but elevated, in the realization that to conquer self is the greatest of all victories? "My grace is sufficient for thee!" That promise was to be his strength in weakness, his joy in desolation.

And as the mother proudly gazed into the earnest, spiritual face, the golden sunset rested on St. Ignatius' Church on the hill-top, as the tender Angelus rang clearly out, gladdening the rose-scented evening.

II. Father Francis.

The days lengthened into weeks, the weeks into months, and the months formed themselves into years. Again, after some years, the mother's birthday, again the sympathetic sunset hour; but now the mother's days on earth are numbered, and more

than usually does the consumptive feel exhausted this evening, for her strength was severely taxed in the morning. She had taken the drive to and from St. Ignatius' Church to assist at her loved one's first Mass, receiving from his hands the Bread of Angels; and now, resting on the cushions which his loving hands arranged in her arm-chair, she sits at the vine-covered portico, gazing after the young priest that has just left her, to gather, as has been his wont, a bunch of wild woodbine and white roses. Tenderly her eyes follow the receding form, as, with hands clasped before her, she murmurs earnest prayers for his future. She sees him walk steadily on, stooping now and again to cull a flower, and anon standing tall and erect, taking in, apparently, the beauties by which he is surrounded.

Her strength seems lessening with each breath she draws, and for a moment she closes her weary eyes—only for a moment—and then she directs their gaze once more to the form dearest to her heart. She sees him now reclining beneath some shrubbery, his face turned towards the little homestead; and as the glorious burst of sunset crimsons the western sky, darting golden rays above the form upon which her dying gaze is resting, the Angelus rings sweetly out; and, breathing for him her last

Ave Maria on earth, her spirit wings its flight above.

And he, his young heart full of holy joy, having left his mother's side, wanders through the pleasant valley and up the daisied hillside. What grand, what noble thoughts dilate his mind! Never did he feel so proud, never so humble—proud in recognition of his great dignity, this young, newly-ordained priest; humble in the consciousness of the sanctity requisite—whilst the very violets under his feet seem to look up and bless him. Oh! such longings crowd his heart, many of which he has already tasted—longings for hardship, penance, self-denial! If on this, the gladdest day of his life, he may demand one thing of God, it is this: a long life of continuous labor (and yet how his pure heart already yearns for the joys of heaven!), in which he may be rigorously exercised in every virtue. Joyously he walks along, repeating verses from the wonderful Psalms, pausing at times to pull a spray of yielding woodbine.

"How long wilt Thou, O Lord," he repeats, "hide Thy beautiful face from me?" And his countenance lights up with holy exultation.

And now he espies the luxurious growth of roses for which he has wandered so far, just there at the

other side of the peaceful little stream, upon which the glimmering sun-rays dance so merrily. He gives a light bound across the sparkling water, but falls just beside the roses. Smilingly he half-rises, but is conscious of a sudden weakness; and some bright red drops flowing from his lips tell him a blood-vessel is ruptured. He moves his prostrate form so that he may gaze once more upon the loved one sitting yonder at the dear old portico. How calm and peaceful she looks with her hands folded before her!

"May God bless her latest hours and take her soon to Himself!"

And as the radiant sunset surrounds his calm, fair face, like a halo, and the evening breeze scatters the pure white roses down about him, the bell from St. Ignatius' tower rings out the Angelus; and as the last faint echo silvers the perfumed evening, the pure soul is wafted heavenward to gaze upon "the beautiful Face" for all eternity.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE wind blew over the lea;
The message it carried to me
Was: Cast away fear; there's happiness near,
And joyous thy life shall be.

The roses looked up in alarm!
(The zephyr intended no harm
In blowing apart a rose-scented heart,
Enhancing each beautiful charm.)

The lily-buds caught the refrain,
And echoed the murmur again:
Ah! cast away fear; there's happiness near:
No longer advert to thy pain.

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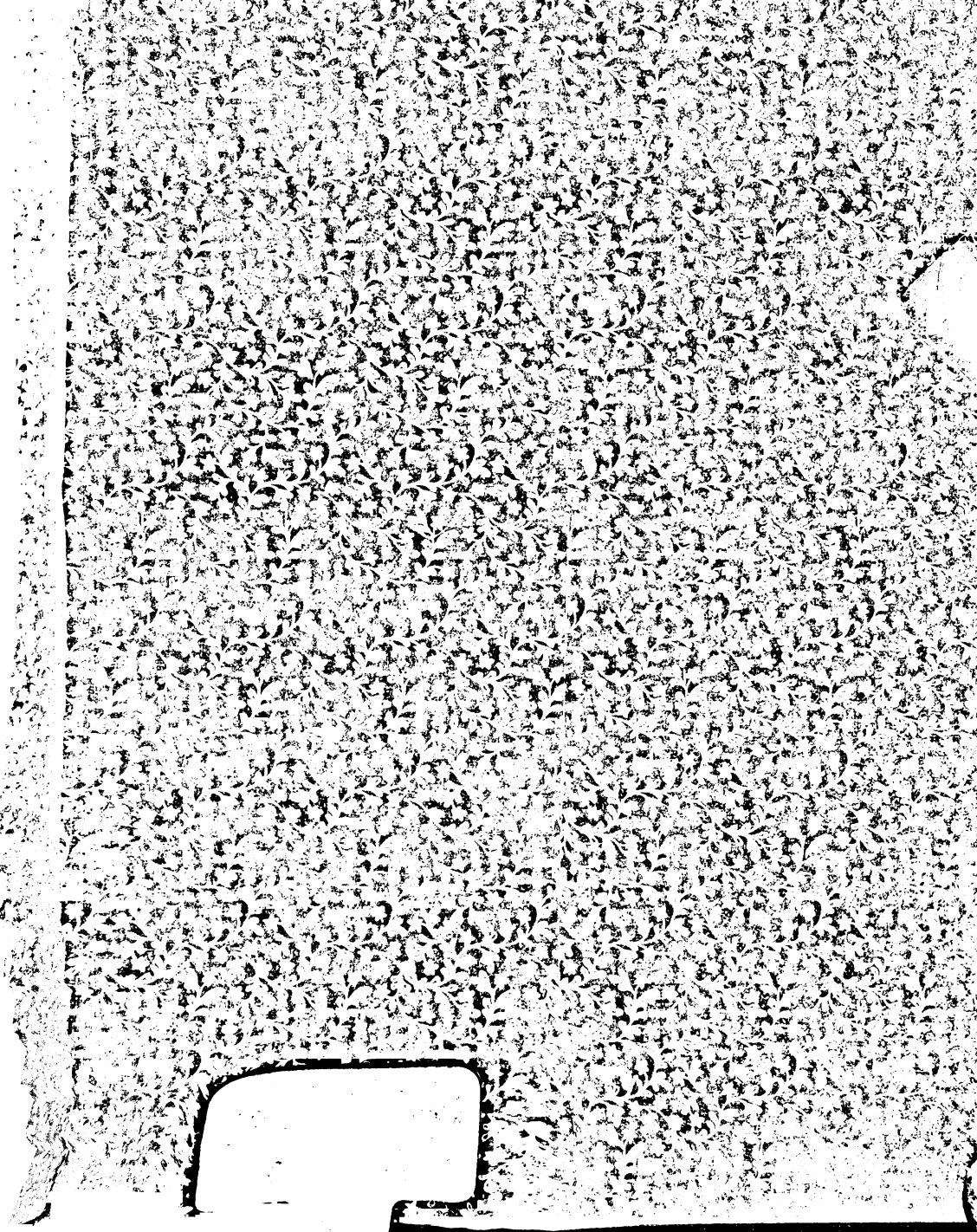
My heart wakened up from its dream,
Entranced with the soft summer gleam.
No more will I moan for the happiness flown,
For sorrow but sorrow doth seem.